

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Celebrate Kelp, Restored!

Giant Kelp Forests are considered the rainforests of the sea with more than 800 species relying on them. They are second only to coral reefs in productivity in our world's oceans. Being so important, you would have thought we would notice when they all but disappeared 30 years ago in Orange County. In 2002 Nancy Caruso, a marine biologist, began working on a project to restore this precious habitat. The project's goal was to involve the community in restoration and that she did. After 8 years of work, 4000 students and 250 volunteer divers have restored nearly 5 acres of kelp forest in Orange County. Caruso taught the students to grow the kelp in their classrooms and then the volunteer divers planted it on the reef.

With all of the work that went into restoring the "Rainforests of the Sea" (as they are sometimes called) Caruso and her team of Kelp Crusaders are putting on a celebration. "We decided to celebrate kelp and its return to Laguna Beach," Caruso said. "One of the largest kelp forests in Orange County used to be at Heisler Park in Laguna and we have restored it! We are so proud, we want to celebrate!" The KelpFest 2010 will be held on April 24, 2010 at Main Beach Laguna from 9-5pm. "We want to tell everyone how important kelp is, explain to them what we have done, and tell them how to protect it," Caruso explained.

The festival is geared for all age levels including fun activities for kids. Many of the festival staff will be students who are growing kelp in their classrooms. There will even be a **LIVE** underwater show from the restored kelp forest at Heisler Park. Divers will answer questions and show participants, that may have never been IN a kelp forest, what it looks like underwater.

-More-

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The festival activities include:

Presentations by students about kelp, why its important, and how to protect it

Storytellers circle- Listen to "old timers" tell stories about how it used to be in the 1950's and early 1960's while diving in Orange County

Public art project- the community will create a large mural to be displayed to show the beauty of the kelp forests

Children's games, art and activities

Dive in- a live demonstration about diving by local Laguna beach dive club the *Laguna Sea Dwellers* before they go in to do a dive in our restored kelp forest off the beach.

Live underwater presentation from the kelp forest by a diver

Walk through Kelp Forest display

Musical performance by the Boys and Girls Club and *Birdsong and the EcoWonders*

Sponsors include: The Boys and Girls Club of Laguna Beach, Crown Acquisitions of Laguna Niguel, and Disney's Grant for Change

KelpFest 2010 Info:

April 24, 2010 9am-5pm Main Beach, Laguna Beach, CA

website www.kelpfest.org

Contact Nancy Caruso 714-206-5147 nancy@getinspiredinc.org

Volunteers needed, sponsorships and donations being accepted

Donations should be made to Get Inspired! a non-profit organization

Get Inspired! a non profit organization dedicated to inspiring passion and purpose through the discovery of arts and sciences. Through hands on science programs like the **Orange County Ocean Restoration Project**, which aims to restore Orange County's coastline one species at a time, students around the county get to make a difference in the world and learn about biology, ecology, chemistry, and physics, all while having fun.

www.getinspiredinc.org